

## **Minutes**

### **Amherst Charter Commission meeting of December 12, 2016**

Members Present: Andy Churchill, Tom Fricke, Meg Gage, Nick Grabbe, Mandi Jo Hanneke, Irv Rhodes, Julia Rueschemeyer, Gerry Weiss. Member Absent: Diana Stein. Consultants Present: Michael Ward, Tanya Stepasiuk. In attendance: Ted Parker, Irma Gonzalez, Richard Morse, Gabor Lukacz, Rob Kusner, Janet McGowan, Felicity Callahan, Shavahn Best, Claudia Brown, Joan Burgess. Camera Operator: Kevin Collins

## **AGENDA**

1. Call to order, approve agenda, approve minutes (5 minutes)
2. Member updates (15 minutes)
3. Continue deliberating on Citizen Participation/Relief, Executive, and Legislative elements (95 minutes)
4. Public comment (10 minutes)
5. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours prior to the meeting
6. Adjourn

The meeting was called to order at 7:03pm at the Amherst Police Station. Approval of the minutes of the Dec. 5 meeting was deferred.

## **MEMBER UPDATES**

Gage: There will be a second round of listening sessions on Jan. 17 at 7 p.m., Jan. 25 at 7 p.m., Jan. 31 at 3 p.m., and Feb. 7 at 10 a.m. The locations are undetermined, but the Woodbury Room at the Jones Library is a good spot because it's familiar to people and has a whiteboard. These sessions won't be posted as commission meetings. The working group on outreach will meet again.

Gage: I've done research on college towns, looking at the number of undergraduate students in relation to the number of residents. Amherst has the lowest ratio of year-round residents to students at 1.4 to 1, except for Storrs, Ct. What does it mean to be in a college town with so many students? Rhodes said it affects state aid. Gage said if students influence elections, that's something we should acknowledge as something we like, and it makes Amherst a fun place to live.

Grabbe: With fake news causing problems nationwide, Amherst is not immune. A Facebook post recent described Charter Commission members as "mostly business people and large landowners so they can run amok with the town for their own gains." As I look around this table, I see a musician, a mediator, a teacher, an education administrator, a nonprofit leader, a therapist and a retired professor. I read this quote to someone today who said, "I've seen your house and Andy Churchill's, and I can attest that you are not large landowners."

Grabbe: I've decided to stop using the word "representative." Maurianne Adams helpfully pointed out that she's heard four or five different definitions, and when that happens, a word has lost a commonly accepted meaning. So I'll use terms like "reflective of the population's wishes" instead."

## **CONTINUED DELIBERATIONS**

Churchill said the commission is in for some "heavy lifting," and the next meeting will be four hours long. Rueschemeyer said she'd like to take real-world Amherst problems and see how each form of government would be impacted. Stepasiuk said the commission is behind, and there should be enough time to take straw votes and move on to the language of the charter. Ward said there are many follow-up

decisions, and room for compromise and creativity, but he's "getting a little nervous" and soon it will be time to put some motions on the table, and remove some options.

Rhodes said he'd like to hear from Amherst Media and the schools. Hanneke said school representatives will come as the commission is debating the schools. Churchill described his talk with Northampton Mayor David Narkowitz, who is familiar with Amherst from working as an aide to John Olver. The next meeting was scheduled from 5:30 to 9:30 on Dec. 19.

Grabbe said that after Gage handed out her version of "Problems with Amherst government about which we agree," many of which he didn't agree with, he wrote out a list of the problems as he sees them and handed the list out.

In response to questions about a mayor/Town Meeting form, in the context of the 1995 charter proposal, Stepasiuk said she could find no precise law prohibiting it, but feels it's not a form of government that's available because it combines one aspect of a city with one of a town, and there are statutes that pertain to cities and others to towns, and there can't be a hybrid. Churchill outlined the various forms. Stepasiuk said that in the 1996 charter, it appeared that it just renamed the Select Board as a council and had an elected mayor who was essentially the chair of the council, as in the "weak" mayor system in Worcester. Rueschemeyer asked if the town could have a strong chair of the Select Board and call him or her a mayor.

Gage said Amherst has a weak Select Board and a strong manager. Rueschemeyer asked why the Select Board is weak; Weiss said it has no authority over personnel. Hanneke said in forms with Town Meeting, there's the same deficiency: a multi-person executive, and there's no way to solve that problem if you want a single person to speak for the town. Stepasiuk asked that the most important issues are. Gage said who sets priorities and who facilitates problem-solving.

Churchill: Currently, if we don't like what the manager is doing, we have to lobby the Select Board, and they have to be dissatisfied enough to discipline or replace him or her, and that would be similar if there were a council and a manager. You can't throw that person out; you have to work through the council. It's like a board of directors hiring a CEO. We can't throw a manager out directly as citizens. With a mayor, they're responsible to the voters directly. and they have a certain amount of authority by virtue of being elected. And their job is to be the point person, run the day-to-day operations, run for reelection on some sort of vision, propose things, and then the council's role is to either approve or deny that.

Churchill: What we have now is this amorphous executive that turns over at different times, and has to discuss things in public. Whereas with a mayor you have one executive who can make decisions and then act on them, with the permission of the council. That was one thing that was frustrating for the Select Board, which has to deal with some person, and that person is sitting there watching them. There's that government by committee. In our system, the executive is split between the Select Board and the manager, and then there's a legislature that either approves or denies at Town Meeting. In a council/mayor, the mayor and the department heads are the executive, and then there's a group selected by the people that can say yes or no.

Gage: Why can't the manager make decisions on his or her own and act with similar authority? The Select Board can still fire the manager. Stepasiuk said much of that is dependent on personalities, but some select boards are very hands-off and some are micro-managers.

Ward: There are some appointments that fall to the Select Board. There are places where virtually all the appointing authority is with the manager. Gage said that in Cambridge, the manager does the budget

Churchill said our manager does the budget too, and the Select Board presents it to Town Meeting, and it's a team effort.

Weiss: There are tensions. Because the Select Board is supposed to have policy authority, it's diluted when you have five people discussing it and trying to tell the manager what they want. There have been select boards that wanted to go along with what's happening in Town Hall, and have a united front, and then you get Select Boards that want to do their own thing. The Select Board does have some authority, but it's not used the same way as others use it.

Ward: It seems the amount of time the Select Board spends on administrative issues as opposed to a policy-setting activity.

Weiss: It's a challenge, with authority over licenses, restaurants, the public way, dogs, water and sewer.

Rhodes: But without policy, the manager would do anything he wanted. The Select Board sets out priorities for the manager, and at the end of the year, evaluates.

Churchill: How do the priorities get set and the manager get evaluated?

Weiss: When on Select Board we told the manager what we wanted and made sure it got funded. The manager would bring a budget and we would push it around. I don't know if they still do that. If we wanted more social service money, the manager would ask where the money would come from, and we'd pull back somewhere.

Hanneke: With a multi-person executive, policy-making body, it's harder for residents who elect the body to know and influence where those policies are through an election. Each person could campaign on policy, but that's only one of three or five or seven. Then they have to go in and lobby two or three other people. Whereas a mayor campaigns, and if they win, you know that's the policy that's going to be the priority, whereas with a multi-person body it's harder to get that. Is there a way to get that clear policy-making authority from the election into a multi-member body?

Ward: You could change the staggering of elections so they are all at the same time, so if there's a big policy question hanging over the town, that might draw slates pro and con, and that might help in terms of setting the policy, but it might increase polarization if you're restructuring the board in the middle of a fight.

Stepasiuk: And you only get it at that one period of time. I want to refocus so we're talking about pros and cons and the things you all find salient, particularly if you're advocating for a particular form. Are there forms that spoke to you as solving these problems, realizing that there are some forms that are better for some things.

Rhodes: A mayor gets elected, a council gets elected. The mayor can't do whatever he or she wants; a council has to approve. If a council vetoes what a mayor wants to do, it's finished. So the mayor can propose to do all kinds of things, to the electorate, but the council has to approve them.

Stepasiuk: A mayor is administrator of town, they do have a lot of power by having control over departments and the budget. Ideally, the vision would be helped by a council.

Rhodes: Council could say, here's the budget, you go out and implement those priorities. It's like School Committee and superintendent, and if you're going to change them, you have to come back to us.

Gage: If we really care about problems 3 and 4 and values 4, 7 and 8, then a professional manager who's trained and hired because of skills is more likely to improve communication, letting people know, call public hearing early in the process. A manager has these management skills, and avoids the problem of money in politics. We saw in the school vote someone gave \$5,000 to the no side, or the state rep race, where the candidate who raised the most money won. A manager is hired based on training, skills and experience, and fit with the town. We have some big, long-term problems that require an attention span longer than one political cycle, like attracting middle-income families when it's more profitable to build student housing off campus. We have 95 entering kindergarteners this year.

Grabbe: If you had mayor and council and director of community engagement, all of these problems or challenges go away. Citizen participation problems can be solved by having greater email contact and having a liaison person to work with participatory budgeting, to be responsible for having more diversity in committees, and having a clearer sense of what voters want. Although I see benefits in having a manager, I am convinced that having a mayor is better because of investing accountability and authority in the same person. A mayor, more so than a manager, would provide a clear and forceful voice speaking on the town's behalf with state and campus officials. A mayor would be a steward of The Big Picture and would unify spending decisions help end polarization.

Rueschemeyer: If you have a mayor, you're going to have professional management from the staff at Town Hall. If we want to change something in the town, I understand about long-term vision, but I'm not sure managers are better.

Gage: What about cross-department communication? Rueschemeyer: A chief of staff could work on that.

Hanneke: We have a manager now, and we have the problems. That's not to say we can't solve them with a manager.

Rhodes: You could have a team going forward with your priorities and objectives that was in tune with your vision. Will the mayor understand there are department heads with specific skills and training and he or she can rely on that to carry out their vision. Under a manager, that would be a question. Does the question of whether a mayor would have those skills outweigh the manager? I think if you have strong and competent department heads and a mayor could recognize that, a mayor would be fine. But you might have a mayor who has no clue.

Rueschemeyer: Why would a mayor as opposed to a manager understand whether department heads are competent?

Rhodes: A manager has already been trained and has confidence and has managed other towns. They have those competencies already.

Churchill: It matters whether the executive feels a responsibility to represent the town, directly or indirectly. When I talked to Mayor Narkowitz about political authority vs professional management, I said you don't have a manager, so where does professional management come from, he said, "I have a finance director, a director of public works, I have chiefs of police and fire, and I can appoint those people, but the council has to approve them, and when I was running for election, I was running with the people looking at me and saying 'Is this the person we want for the CEO of our town?' Do we think they have the vision and do we think they can work with the apparatus we have, to accomplish that vision. There's something about being directly elected and having to articulate a vision and having to do a job interview in public and compete with other people and get elected to do a certain vision, that has a power of direct representation, whereas a manager is mediated by a Select Board, with overlapping terms, it doesn't feel as powerful and as directly reflective of what the town wants. We do have some problems and

we're worried about how we're going to solve them, and we do have a manager and a multi-person Select Board. Our ability to have a conversation about the problems we face, such as development, student housing, neighborhood issues vs. town needs, I don't think we have a structure that allows those conversations. With a mayor, who has to run for election on a vision, and a council with a significant number of neighborhood representatives on it, we could have a structure that would allow those conversations to take place out in the open. Why wasn't the master plan brought to Town Meeting? How do we decide what areas we're going to develop? Those conversations happen in hidden or scattershot ways rather than "What's our vision for the town? Where does someone want to take us? What are the neighborhood representatives going to approve? There's a quality of direct authority and the ability to have sustained and nuanced conversations that we don't have the ability to do right now. With a council and mayor, it would be the most responsive and hopefully effective form that I can think of.

Ward: Northampton's chief of staff doesn't have what many cities do – a strong administrative managerial position. You could construct that position to provide that counterbalance.

Fricke: I talked to Mike Sullivan in South Hadley and had the impression whether you want a mayor or not should have less to do with professional management because there's the capacity for it in any form. The mayor is a political figure and there's going to be managerial support. It's not that it's the most salient question in determining whether you want a mayor or not. I'm wrestling far more with if you have a mayor, you have someone who's holding that vision challenge, but would be directly accountable to the town's voters. I'm thinking about inclusiveness and the multiplicity of voices.

Fricke: If a council is big enough, if we pay careful attention to wards, how do we maximize chances a mayor who is elected by a majority of voters is going to be seeking approval for policies and visions from people who represent smaller groups within the town and not just the solid majority. I'm thinking about how we make sure people feel their voices are heard at the highest level as we think about how big a council might be, or the advantages and disadvantages of having a council. The deliberative role should include as many voices as we can.

Weiss: I'm struggling with the issue of a strong executive, which is important to me. But by an earlier conversation we eliminated a mayor and Town Meeting. But in the 1996 charter, the mayor was designated as weak; if you can get away with that, can you designate it as strong?

Stepasiuk: It's the function and not the name of the body. So this was like an elected Select Board chair. You could do that. So you can't have a powerful mayor, who is elected, which is a city form, in conjunction with a Town Meeting.

Weiss: Since I am extremely loath to give up Town Meeting, how do we have a strong executive? I really don't know the answer to that. The tension between the Select Board and manager, if you make the board more powerful, you have to pay them. You're going to go to a lot of meetings. I spent 15 to 20 hours a week on the Select Board, and I didn't have much power.

Ward: You could do little things to strip away some of the time that's occupying the board, but I'm not sure that solves the problem.

Weiss: You could have a board that supervises licenses, but sometimes that's important stuff. I'm divided on how to best do it.

Churchill: With a Town Meeting, we have to have a multi-person executive; you can have council and manager.

Stepasiuk: They could be hiring the manager, but they are a legislative body, so it's not the same partnership.

Churchill: So, if you have a council and a manager, who sets the policy?

Weiss: The manager's an administrator.

Stepasiuk: With a council/manager form, the council is the legislative body, and the manager is the executive. The manager is very powerful in that form. It functions similarly to a mayor/council form; the manager heads the executive branch.

Churchill: They never have to go to the townspeople and say 'Here's where I want to take the town.'

Stepasiuk: No, in fact many of them operate behind the scenes. They're seen as administrative.

Ward: There's a wide variability in managers, and some have low profiles. Some towns with Select Board and manager give all the functions to the manager; you have a relatively powerful manager, but in some like Saugus, the manager has much more authority and it takes four out of five votes to dismiss.

Rueschemeyer: I'm struggling with exactly what Gerry is articulating. The one thing I don't want to consider is a manager/council. I still can't get over that we can't have a strong mayor and Town Meeting. Those executive issues are very important.

Rhodes: To have a council and a manager, where the manager has all this executive authority, but is accountable only to the council, and council is elected, and things go wrong, and people throw out the council, and the manager is still in place. I want responsibility, accountability and authority and I look at an elected council and elected mayor. That gives a strong focus on the citizens of Amherst. I could go for that, but only if there's robust direct citizen participation available, some kind of official role.

Grabbe: I agree with Irv. If we had a mayor/council form with a position of director of citizen participation and communication, the amount of citizen participation would not decline from where it is now; I think we could set it up so it would increase. I could see this person recruiting volunteers for citizen boards, writing a weekly email to residents about what's happening in Town Hall, being responsible for increasing diversity on town boards and notifying citizens of upcoming public hearings, and even being responsible for implementing participatory budgeting.

Grabbe: I agree with Andy that it would be ideal to have a council composed of some at-large members with the majority representing districts, parts of town that are distinct, and if you have a problem with a road or a pothole, or if you want to state an opinion about development, you call your district councilor. I had originally proposed the idea of townwide forums four times a year, but have since then heard the argument that maybe these could be decentralized, and these forums could be held in the neighborhoods. This could be a way to strengthen citizen participation, have a strong executive, and have elections that measure public opinion.

Gage: We haven't talked about participation yet. For it to be meaningful, citizens have to have power. It has to be in relation to decision-making, so they have input. Not just talk, and then the decision-makers can do what they want.

Gage: There's tension and conflict over development, and I'm afraid developers will have influence over who's elected mayor. The person who was elected state representative was the one who was the least qualified but raised the most money. If people who have wealth can influence elections, particularly right

now. We've seen that zoning is something we need to address. Zoning has become contentious and sides are lined up and there has to be mediation, and I fear that electing a mayor who is popular with some people but not with others. Or someone who wants to be a mediator, no one will give that person any money, because people will want a mayor who's advocating for their position. Some of us want to reduce taxes while increasing the number of middle-class families, and I fear the leadership we need for that isn't going to come from a political campaign.

Churchill: Neighborhood issues, concerns over development overrunning them, affecting them beyond their control, developers or students. We don't have a way of having that conversation now. If we had a council who had a representative from Gateway and North and South Amherst, we could have a forum where that representative was part of the discussion. We don't talk enough about planning. Part of what our government should be doing is coming out with consensus planning within which you could situate neighborhood concerns, and then ask are zoning questions consistent with a plan that's been bought into by the town. If you had a popularly elected executive who had to run on a vision, and a council, then there are the citizen engagement elements. Places like Ithaca and Minnesota have "participatory planning" that's more bottom-up that goes to a community plan. If we could build this in, maybe with public hearings on the budget and the schools and zoning and some other elements, we could have citizen engagement. If our citizens are feeding their expertise into the council, then we have a way of having a conversation we can't now. Now, people feel worried and threatened and try to stop things. We don't have a way to build things together. If we need more revenue, but we don't want a monstrosity on the common or something, how do we balance those things? If a mayor articulates a big picture, and keeps the day-to-day things running, and a council representing the districts, and some of these participation mechanisms wrapped around it, we could have that conversation.

Stepasiuk: The structure of the boards and committees could stay the same. Appointments vs. elections are a question; you don't want three committees working on the same thing.

Hanneke: Participatory planning is designed to be bottom-up, to get residents from all stripes, going out and recruiting people who do not usually participate in planning, making sure the participation is early and often. Many of the problems we hear about zoning, participatory planning speaks about needing to do. Ithaca and Rochester have implemented it. I'd like to see if it can be written into the charter, to keep citizens engaged. I recognize that if we go the council route, we do lose a lot of participation just by the loss of Town Meeting. We lose one way to put a stop to things that people are afraid of, and people worry that influence happens more easily in a council form of government. Participatory planning is a way to alleviate some of those concerns. I wonder if term limits is another thing to consider.

Gage: I'm opposed to term limits. In a democracy, people should have as much choice as possible.

Grabbe: I would like to consider the option of giving the boards and committees more authority than they have now. They frequently advise the Select Board. Give them the authority to propose things to the council and perhaps even when the council receives a suggestion from the community, delegate some research to the boards in that particular area.

Weiss: If you have a city form of government, are there any limits to additional elected bodies. Citizen forums don't work for me; they don't have any power. Could you have some kind of citizen check and balance, like Town Meeting, where you need 75 or 80 percent vote to overturn a council action.

Stepasiuk: It's similar to Worcester and Newton when they were crafting their charters. That's how they wound up with neighborhood councils made up of elected voters. They might have delegated or advisory authority about their neighborhoods.

Ward: Some cities have elected Planning Boards, and one has an elected Zoning Board of Appeals. It's not common, but it's doable.

Weiss: In Dartmouth, they have 34,000 people and a small university and they have an administrator, not a manager.

Ward: One difference to be aware of is in Dartmouth, fire and emergency services are not part of town government; they have separate fire districts. Fire districts are not subject to Proposition 2 1/2.

Fricke: I agree with Meg that if we're considering concentrating government in so few hands, we're inviting money to play a bigger role in our elections. Mike Sullivan said we should consider our colleges as potentially a big player in elections. We could structure a government that is largely immune to the role that money plays in elections. You can't exclude money, but things have changed, and access to information is not primarily through newspapers. We could talk about ways the town should make sure candidates don't have to have access to a war chest to reach people, such as on a web site, where voters could go for information about the candidates. It wouldn't exclude other forms of campaigning. I think we have ways to level the playing field when we're talking about several town elections. There are creative solutions.

Ward: There are examples where new mayors have won office against old guards, such as Alex Morse in Holyoke, who was not part of the old guard. Mayoral elections rely more on shoe leather than state and national elections do.

Grabbe: When I was in Greenfield, I saw the special section of the Recorder when Greenfield changed to mayor/council, and there were extensive comments from all the candidates. With respect to big money, I think it concerns all of us, but all donations above a certain amount have to be made public, and if you are receiving a lot of money, that would be a negative to getting elected in Amherst, not a positive. Our incoming state rep did spend the most money, but that's not the reason why he was elected; he knocked on every door in the district.

Grabbe: I want to go out on a limb and agree with my friend Gerry Weiss on one point. Although I favor a council/mayor form, it makes me a little nervous to put zoning in the hands of two-thirds of a council. I think a lot of people would feel a little nervous about that. Perhaps an elected or half-elected Planning Board. I think a lot of people would be reassured if there was some kind of bicameral decision-making on zoning.

Grabbe: The form of citizen participation that is most common around the country is voting, and our record in the last five years is dismal. If we had more competition and discussion of issues and debates in the neighborhoods, I think you'd get a lot more voter participation.

Rhodes: Taxes, development and affordability are the three big hot-button issues that we have to deal with in constructing a form of government. And it has to bring together these different camps. We need a form of government that bridges those differences. So I look at forms of government where people can throw them out of office, at a known time. So I look at a council as a yes, you can have that kind of responsible government. But when I think of giving up Town Meeting, and not having a body that can inform the electorate doesn't feel good. However, I'm willing to give it up if there is a way to get robust citizen participation.

Weiss: We've agreed that we want to reach, at the end of our deliberations, next year, a charter we can bring to town that stands a high chance of ratio of yes to no. And I'm afraid if we break down to Town Meeting vs. town council, we're not going to achieve that. I don't have the answer. That's why I'm coming



up with ideas for compromises. If you come back to voters with another council or mayor/manager form, you're going to have a very active campaign, with a lot of money thrown at it, a lot of truth and slightly untruth, and fake news and real news, and it'll be a close vote, and we might change the form of government but we won't change the atmosphere in town. We may forget that as we lobby for things.

Churchill: What we have now isn't solving that problem. If we're thinking about what will, I'm hearing interest in some kind of council, what if for next time we said, 'If we have a council, what would we wrap around it to make it as attractive as possible, in terms of citizen participation, in terms of wrestling with some of these issues,' if we each brought in something that said, 'Here's something, and here's why, and maybe we find some overlap.'

Stepasiuk: What about the size of the council? Twenty-four is the largest, at one point Saugus proposed 50. Grabbe: Above 13, you really become unwieldy. Rueschemeyer: Could you have a 240-person council?

Ward: It's clear that there is no perfect form of government, and all options have their weaknesses, once you pick a direction, then you spend your time trying to strengthen it around those weaknesses. You should take a straw vote, and then start building around it what things you can do to ameliorate the weaknesses.

Grabbe: The chair of the Planning Board told me that it is impossible to have an elected board in a mayor/council form of government, and he quoted the MGL section. There are two towns with elected boards; are they in violation of the law?

Ward: Amesbury and Taunton are the ones. Stepasiuk: I suspect he was quoting to you the setting up of planning boards in newly formed cities. That's the default if you don't have a charter. You can write a charter that overrules the MGL, but I want to double-check.

Rhodes: I'm thinking about a contentious election to approve this. Anything that doesn't include Town Meeting will be contentious. That doesn't mean I'm for keeping Town Meeting.

Churchill: So next time, we're coming with proposals we'll present to each other. Rueschemeyer: I don't think it has to be so formal. If anyone has ideas for participation bring them on. Churchill: It would be useful to hear a coherent approach.

Rueschemeyer: It's more important for all of us to have a coherent approach. Gage: I support Andy's proposal.

Churchill: I don't think it needs to be long, but if we have some ideas about citizen participation, it matters how the various parts fit together, in terms of meeting some of the things we've talked about, even if we change the structure. That's a way of moving along, rather than talking about each element in isolation.

Public comment:

- Janet McGowan: we could have better planning with neighborhoods now, and a citizen engagement officer now. Why don't we have these now? What do the great New England towns do?
- Rob Kusner: Wants broad-based, meaningful citizen participation, with decision-making authority. Empower committees. Subcommittees of TM? At-large members of TM?
- Rich Morse: Amherst can't come to consensus. In TM, neighborhoods defend themselves. Other forms offer the collective wisdom of the town. I want a precinct representative – that intermediary function is lacking. TM is a parallel universe – voters don't know the candidates who run for it.

- Gabor Lukacs: My biggest concern is, if we don't have TM, how will citizens learn how to participate
- Ted Parker: Alisa Brewer said her own privilege allowed her to serve. TM embodies that – members have time, resources, many are retired. It's not broadly representative – members have time and opportunity to protect their own interests – this is a form of \$ in politics. For the poor, the one time they can meaningfully participate is to vote, but their votes for TM and Select Board often don't matter. Getting to vote for someone who represents them, like a strong mayor and district representative, would be better.
- Kitty Axelson-Berry: What does public participation mean to you?
- Shavahn Best: With 256 total members, TM is more representative than a council of 9, or 30. She is a renter and knows other renters, and people of color, parents, gays. Got involved due to worry about being priced out of Amherst. Look at committees working with TM.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Nick Grabbe, Clerk

Documents: Nick Grabbe's list of problems with the current government